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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

BHAKTI—III

THERE are three kinds of love, selfish, mutual and unselfish. Selfish love is the lowest. It only seeks its own happiness, no matter if the beloved suffers. In mutual love, the lover not only seeks the happiness of his or her beloved, but has an eye towards his or her own happiness too. Unselfish love is the highest. The unselfish lover minds only the welfare of the beloved.

A TRUE lover sees his God as his nearest and dearest, just as the milkmaids of Vrindavana saw in Sri Krishna not the Lord of the universe (Jagannatha) but their own Lord (Gopinatha).

CAN Divine Love be acquired by reading holy books?

The Hindu almanac contains forecast of the annual rainfall, but if we squeeze the book, not even a drop of water can be got out of it. So also many good sayings are to be found in holy books but merely reading them will not make one religious. One must practise the virtues taught in them to acquire the love of God.

TO M., one of the disciples, the Master talking of the Gopis said, "How wonderful was their devotion (*Anuraga*)! At the sight of the *Tamal* tree, they were seized with the very madness of love (*Premounmada*)." (The dark colour of the *Tamal* tree put in mind Radha of Sri Krishna.)

Disciple: This was also the case with Gouranga. Looking at a forest he thought it was Vrindavana that was before him!

Master: Oh! If one is but favoured with a particle of this ecstatic Love (*Prema*)! What a devotion! Of this devotion they had not only the full complement (sixteen annas) but a good deal more (five sikas, five annas).

IT is immaterial whether one believes or not that Radha and Krishna were incarnations of God. One may believe (like the Hindu or the Christian) in God's incarnations. One may not believe (like the modern Brahmo) in His taking a human or any form. But let all have a yearning for this *intense love* of the Lord (*Anuraga*). This is the one thing needful.

LEAVES FROM THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(According to M.)

THE MEANS TO BHAKTI

M. :—Sir, how can the mind be fixed on God?

Sri Ramakrishna :—By always occupying one's thoughts with the name of the Lord and His deeds. Also by living in the company of holy men. One should now and then pay visits to holy men or to devotees of the Lord. If one is taken up with the affairs of the world day and night, one cannot fix one's mind on God. Hence the great necessity of going often into solitude to meditate on God. In the first stage of one's spiritual life, unless one lives in solitude at times, it becomes very hard to keep one's mind fixed on God.

The plant, when young, should be hedged in all round. Otherwise cows and goats browse it off.

Meditate on God in the heart, in nooks and corners and in the woods. Always try to know the real from the unreal. God is the only reality, that is, the Absolute, everything else is unreal, that is, not-Absolute. Try to drive away the thoughts of the unreal—phenomenal universe—from the mind in this way.

M. :—Sir, how should one live in the world?

RENUNCIATION IN HOUSEHOLD LIFE

Sri Ramakrishna :—Do everything but

The Leaves will shortly be published in a book form.—Ed.

rest your mind on God. Be with your wife, children, parents and other relations. Serve them as if they were your nearest and dearest, but know in the heart of your hearts that they are not yours.

A maidservant in a rich man's house is indeed always engaged in work, but her mind is away at her own home in her native village. Then again she nurses the children of her master as if they were her own. She says, "It is *my* Rama, it is *my* Hari," but she knows full well that all this is not hers.

The tortoise goes about in the water in quest of food; but do you know where its thoughts are? They are on the edge of the water, where its eggs are. Likewise, do all your worldly duties but let your mind rest on God.

If you want to be of the world without attaining devotion unto God, you will get more entangled. You will lose your balance at times of misfortune, bereavement and distress. And the more you will do the works of the world, the more you will think of them, the more will grow your attachment to them.

One should smear one's hands well with oil before breaking a jack-fruit open. Otherwise the gum of the fruit sticks on them. One should put one's hands to the affairs of the world, after taking care to smear them well with the oil of devotion to God.

THE MEANS—PRACTICE IN SOLITUDE

But to attain this devotion, solitude is the one thing needful. To make butter, milk should be kept in a solitary place, where there is nothing to disturb it, so that it may curdle. Then leaving all other works, one has to sit down and churn it. It is thus that butter is made.

Again you will see that with this very mind, when it contemplates God in solitude, one may get devotion, knowledge and non-attachment to things of the world. But, on the other hand, if left to the affairs of the world, it degenerates and dwells only on lust and gold.

The world is like water and mind is like milk. If milk and water be kept together, they mix and become one; in vain then would be the search for the pure milk. But, suppose, milk is made into curd and the butter, churned out of it, is put in water, it floats. Similarly, first obtain the butter of devotion and knowledge by spiritual practice for some time in solitude. Then if that butter be kept in the water of the world, it will not mix with it but will float.

At the same time, discrimination is needful. 'Lust and gold are transitory, God is the only real thing. What good is money? It furnishes food, clothes and dwelling. That is all. But it can never lead one to God. Therefore money could never be the end and aim of life.' This is discrimination. Do you understand?

M. :—Yes, sir. Lately I read a Sanskrit drama, *Prabodha-chandrodaya*. It contains discrimination between the real and the unreal.

Sri Ramakrishna :—Yes, discrimination between the real and the unreal.

Just think, what is there in money or what is there in a beautiful body? Consider the materials that go to build the body. Why do people keep their mind on these things, forsaking God? Why do they forget God?

THE MEANS TO THE REALIZATION OF GOD

M. :—Can God be seen?

Sri Ramakrishna :—Yes, certainly. Living occasionally in solitude, occupying one's thoughts with the name of the Lord and His deeds, discrimination between the real and the unreal,—these are the means one should adopt.

M. :—In what stage of the mind can it realize God?

Sri Ramakrishna :—He can be seen by crying for intense yearning after Him. People cry some for their wives and children, they cry more for money, but who cries for God?

Here the Master sang :

"My mind, call upon Shyama with a real, earnest call and let us see how She can stay away....."

Where there is yearning, the twilight is seen, after which the sun rises. The realization of God follows in the wake of yearning after Him. He reveals Himself when the forces of the three yearnings—that of a worldly-minded man towards his possessions, of a mother towards her child and of a faithful wife towards her husband,—combine; by the power of that yearning for God, one obtains Him.

The thing is that God is to be loved. The love with which a worldly-minded man loves his possessions, the love with which a mother loves her child, the love with which a faithful wife loves her

husband, if God is loved with the force of all these loves combined, one can see Him.

One must call on Him, with intense yearning for Him. The kitten knows only one call 'mew, mew,' to call its mother. It stays where its mother puts

it, sometimes in the kitchen, sometimes on the bare earth, sometimes on a bedstead. When it is in trouble, it cries 'mew, mew,' to call its mother. It knows nothing else. Wherever its mother is, she comes when she hears this 'mew, mew.'

RELIGION AS THE HIGHEST ART

THE lower the animal, the more is its enjoyment in the gross objects of the senses. Its superiority is measured by the development of its perception of the fine. Ignorance sees manifoldness only, but knowledge generalizes the particulars and, at first, posits in theory a unity running through the many and then actually discovers that unity. True civilization consists in the culture of the two faculties, those of the perception of the fine and of discovering a unity behind variety.

What is Art? It is the spiritualization of Nature, the creation of the beautiful as opposed to the useful, called forth by the desire for the fine in man. It is that indefinable *ness* in a thing, which cannot be degraded to the rank of the useful.

When art presents different representations in a group, its success is commensurate with its ability to present a central theme, to show each of the representations severally and, at the same time, arrange them in a manner that each is united with and contributes its quota to develop and bring into prominence the central theme.

The higher the art, the finer are its representations, the more prominent is its central theme in a group and the

greater is its capability of unifying the different parts of the group in its central theme.

Take for instance drama, which is regarded by some as the climax of literary art. Its excellence is determined by the degree in which the characters succeed in reflecting the fine element of human nature,—the subtle feelings and thought-life of man and by the manner in which the subsidiary characters unite in helping to develop the part assigned to the hero. The hero's character should grow like an organism, without labour, without a break and its consecutive phases should merge into one another in a smooth continuous flow. Such unity is revealed in an inimitable way in that master-piece of dramatic art, *Shakuntala*. Like the moon of the bright fortnight she grows little by little and the reader is never at a loss to find the self-same simple *Shakuntala* of the hermitage of Kanva, in the court of Dushyanta or at the forest retreat of Marichi.

We do not so much admire the picture as a work of art, in which the artist delineates with his pencil all the ideas meant to be conveyed, as the one in which a few ideas in the brush conspire

to suggest the rest. Suggestions satisfy the desire for the fine more than concrete representations. In a group, the several parts ought to combine to develop a common idea, either associated with a particular central figure, or, if not thus associated, suggested collectively by all the parts.

Besides fineness and unity of theme, another and by far the most essential condition of art is that it must neither be the same as Nature nor contradict her. If it imitates Nature, its utility evidently ceases, for it then does not create a new idea but repeats the ideas already present in Nature. There is certainly great credit in faithful imitation of Nature. But the aim of art ought not to be self-glorification by display of its skill in such imitation but service to humanity by addition of new things to its stock of pleasures supplied by Nature.

Art ought to be an improvement on Nature, but such improvement, to be intelligible to man, must not be contrary to his ordinary experience. In other words, art must not be unnatural. Unnaturalness is a sure sign of degradation of art. Such art, instead of being a source of pleasure to man, becomes an unintelligible monstrosity. True enjoyment being impossible without clear understanding, such art fails to accomplish its main object, namely, the creation of things of joy. Art is like a full blown lotus and Nature the muddy bottom whence the stem of the lotus draws its nourishing sap. To live, art must be always connected with and nourished by Nature. Its death is certain with the cessation of the connection.

Degradation in art is deplorably obvious in India in more than one instance. With a few exceptions, there is hardly observed unity of theme or fineness of suggestion in our pictures. With four hands, three eyes or five heads, our gods and goddesses are, more or less, unnatural and fail as productions of art. (We mean to criticize the forms of the deities from the standpoint of art and not offend their devotees, as such criticism has nothing to do with the religious associations connected with them.) Appreciation of art is one of the signs of regeneration of a nation. Among other duties, the patriots of India ought to impress upon her people the higher conceptions of art, create a taste in them for their appreciation and teach them to give a touch of art to all, the most trifling as well as the most important actions of their everyday life.

Religion is the highest art, because in it the conditions of art are satisfied in the best manner conceivable to man and because it comprises in its fold all other arts, being the genus, as it were, of which the other arts are species.

God is the central theme of religion as an art. He is the finest conception, capable of realization not by the senses but by the most perfected mind. The central theme of religion is, therefore, the finest imaginable representation.

God is the ultimate unity underlying all variety and as the unities of the lower arts comprehend their respective varieties, so He, as the ultimate unity, comprehends all other unities as well as varieties. The truly religious man sees behind the manifold diversities the Divine Unity, not in thought but in a more intense sense

than the diversities themselves are seen. Hence the artistic unity of religion is the most general and therefore, the highest.

God is not only Nature but something more, interpenetrating Nature. "As the one fire, having entered the world, manifests itself in every form, so the One, the inmost Soul of all beings, manifests Himself in every form and *is yet more besides* (Katha Up. V. 9.). To the man who has not realized God, conceptions of Him may appear unlike his experiences of Nature. But to the man who realizes Him, He is not unnatural or supernatural but immanent in Nature. The whole of Nature assumes a different meaning to that man and he sees Nature in God and God in Nature. The theme of religion is no longer unnatural but a reality ever present in and bathing in celestial beauty and life every part of Nature.

Man's misery and sorrow come from his selfishness and attempts to establish permanent kinship with the transitory incidents of an eternally changeful world. Religion brings him face to face with an Infinity before which his little self melts into insignificance, with a Permanence, the vision of which exposes unmistakably the impermanence of the world and destroys the folly of his endeavours to have abiding relationships with it. With his little "me" left, he lives in the world, no more a victim to burning desires for self-assertion with its attendant sorrows and the world does no more weigh upon him with that tremendous seriousness, for he has seen through its transience. Life to him has become a play, a joy, the *beautiful-without-utility* of religion as an art.

Hinduism does not stop here. It is not

satisfied with the realization of the Godhead as a universal unity only. The sweetness of Divine Unity is, as it were, the substance out of which Hinduism makes many particular preparations, suited to different tastes. They are the Hindu gods and goddesses. They are like so many figures carved out of the rock of Divinity. To the beginner in religion, the deities are means of realization of the Unity. Besides they have a deeper meaning. Once the Unity realized, they are not looked upon as means but as various modes of enjoying the Unity. Milk can be enjoyed in shapes such as curd, cream, butter, ghee, cheese, &c.; even so, Kali, Durga, Shiva, Vishnu, and other deities are the many shapes, in which the advanced devotee enjoys the one God. People, with no art in them, or with whom religion is talk and not reality, fail to grasp this deep import of what they call 'idolatry.' Verily was said "He that hath eyes to see, let him see." Let the shapes and forms of these deities be more *artistic* and Hinduism will achieve the consummation of religion as an art, which other religions are yet too young to conceive.

Every attempt at fineness or unity is a step towards the finest and highest Unity and the goal is reached when that last unity is obtained. Ordinarily religion signifies this final goal. Taking religion in a broader sense, every one of our attempts at art, in music, painting, writing, speech, dress, food or any of our doings, is an assertion of the desire in man for religion. Knowingly or unknowingly, every artist is more or less religious and every art more or less a religion.

A SANNYASI

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(Continued from page 213, Vol. VII.)

III.

*(Written to M, the writer of the "Leaves from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna")*DEHRA DHUN,
21th November, 1897.

My dear M——

Many many thanks for your second leaflet. It is indeed wonderful. The move is quite original and never the life of a great teacher was brought before the public untarnished by the writer's mind as you are doing. The language also is beyond all praise, so fresh, so pointed and withal so plain and easy.

I cannot express in adequate terms how I have enjoyed them. I am really in a transport when I read them. Strange is n't it? Our teacher and Lord was so original and each one of us will have to be original or nothing. I now understand why none of us attempted His Life before.—It has been reserved for you, this great work. He is with you evidently.

With all love and Namaskar,
VIVEKANANDA.

Socratic dialogues are Plato all over. You are entirely hidden. Moreover the dramatic part is infinitely beautiful. Everybody likes it here or in the West.

V.

IV.

*(Written to a gentleman of Allahabad)*ALMORA,
1st June, 1897.

Dear Mr.——

The objections you show about the

Vedas would be valid if the word Vedas meant the *Samhitas*.

The word Veda includes the three parts, the *Samhitas*, the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*, according to the universally received opinion in India. Of these the first two portions, as being the ceremonial parts, have been nearly put out of sight; the *Upanishads* have alone been taken up by all our philosophers and founders of sects.

The idea that the *Samhitas* are the only Vedas is very recent and started by the late Swami Dayananda. This opinion has not got any hold on the orthodox population.

The reason of this opinion was that Swami Dayananda thought he could find a consistent theory of the whole based on a new interpretation of the *Samhitas*, but the difficulties remained the same, only they fell back on the *Brahmanas*. And in spite of the theories of interpretation and interpolation a good deal still remains.

Now if it is possible to build a consistent religion on the *Samhitas*, it is a thousand times more sure that a very consistent and harmonious faith can be based upon the *Upanishads* and moreover here one has not to go against the already received national opinion.

Here all the Acharyyas of the past would side with you and you have a vast scope for new progress.

Gita no doubt has already become the Bible of Hinduism and it fully deserves to be so, but the personality of Krishna has become so covered with haze that it is impossible to-day to draw any life-giving inspiration from that *life*. Moreover the present age requires new modes of thought and new life. Hoping this will help you thinking in the line,

I am yours with blessings,
VIVEKANANDA.

V.

(Translated from a letter to the Editor,
"Bharati", Vol. XXVI, 5.)

DARJEELING,
c/o M. N. Banerjee Esqr.,
24th April, 1897.

Dear Madam,

I thank you heartily for your sympathy, but for various reasons do not think publicity advisable at present. The principal reason is that the money I was asked to make good, was mostly spent for the reception of the English friends who came out with me from England. So, if this matter is published, there will be the scandal which you wish to avoid. Moreover, I understand that since I was unable to pay, a settlement has been come to about it.

In reply to your question about the method of work, the most important thing I have to say is "that the work should be started on a scale which would be commensurate with the results desired." I have heard much of your liberal mind, patriotism and steady perseverance from my friend Miss Muller and the proof of your erudition is evident. I look upon it as a great good fortune that you are desirous to know what little this insignificant life has been able to attempt; I shall state it in this short letter as far

as I can. But first I shall lay before you my mature convictions for your deliberation; we have been slaves for ever, i. e., it has never been given to the masses in India to express the inner light which is their inheritance. The occident has been rapidly advancing towards freedom for the last few centuries. In India it was the king who used to prescribe everything from Kulinism down to what one should eat and what one should not. In Western countries the people do everything themselves.

The king now has nothing to say to any social matter; on the other hand, the Indian people have not yet even the least self-respect, what to say of self-reliance? The self-respect, which is the basis of Vedanta, has not yet been slightly carried into practice. It is for this reason the Western method—i. e., first of all, discussion about the wished for end, then the carrying it out by the combination of all the forces—is of no avail even now in this country; it is for this reason we appear so greatly conservative under foreign rule. If this be true, then it is a vain attempt to do any great work by means of public discussion; 'There is no chance of headache where there is no head'—where is the public? Besides we are so debile that our energy is exhausted if we undertake to discuss anything, none is left for work. It is for this reason, I suppose, we observe in Bengal almost always 'much cry but little wool.' Secondly, as I have said before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India. It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope—patiently, steadily and without a

noise. Now about work:—from the day when education and culture began to spread gradually from patricians to plebians, grew the distinction between the modern civilization as of Western countries and the ancient civilization as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land by dint of pride and royal authority. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i. e., by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform. Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them, by sucking whose blood the people known as 'gentlemen' have become and continue to be gentlemen. How many sepoys were brought by the Musalmans? How many Englishmen are there? Where except in India can be had millions of men who can cut the throats of their own fathers and brothers for six rupees? 60 millions of Musalmans in 700 years of Mahomedan rule and 2 millions of Christians in 100 years of Christian rule—what makes it so? Why has originality entirely forsaken the country? Why are our deft-fingered artisans daily becoming extinct, unable to compete with the Europeans? By what power again has the German labourer succeeded in shaking the many-century-grounded firm footing of the English labourer?

Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing the comforts and education of even the poor people there brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. Through education self-respect, and through self-respect the inherent Brahman is waking up (in them), while (the Brahman) in us is gradually becoming dormant. In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come—trodden down, haggard, penniless and wooden-headed—with the only belonging a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at one end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months—he walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of fright. What is the cause? Our Vedanta says that that Irishman was surrounded by contempt in his country—the whole of Nature was telling him with one voice, "Pat, you have no more hope, you were born slave and will remain so." Being thus told from his birth Pat believed in it and hypnotized himself that he was very low and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America than the shout went up on all sides, "Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything, have courage." Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up, Nature herself spoke, as it were, "Arise, awake, etc." (Katha Upa., I. III. 4.)

Likewise the education of our boys is very negative. The school-boy learns nothing, but loses all—want of *shraddha*

is the result. The *shraddha* which is the key-note of the Veda and the Vedanta—the *shraddha* which emboldened Nachiketa to face Yama and ask him, through which *shraddha* this world moves—the annihilation of that *shraddha*! “The ignorant and the devoid of *shraddha* run to ruin” (Gita, IV. 40). Therefore are we so near destruction. The remedy—now?—The spreading of education. First of all, Self-knowledge—I do not mean thereby the matted hair, staff, kamandalu and mountain caves, which the word suggests. Cannot the knowledge by which is attained even freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, bring ordinary material prosperity? Certainly it does. Freedom, dispassion, renunciation are all of these the very highest ideals, but “even a little of this Dharma saves from the great fear (of birth and death)” (Gita, II. 40). Dualist, qualified monist, monist, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta, even the Buddhist and the Jain—whatever sects have arisen in India are all at one in this respect, that infinite power is latent in this Jivatman (individualized soul), from the ant to the highest perfect man there is the same Atman in all, the difference being only in manifestation. “As a farmer breaks the obstacles (to the course of water)” (Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, Kaivalyapada, 3). That power manifests as soon as it gets the opportunity and right place and time. From the highest god to the meanest grass, the same power is present in all—whether manifested or not. We shall have to call forth that power by going from door to door.

Secondly, along with this education has to be imparted. It is easy to

say, but how to reduce it into practice? There are thousands of unselfish, kind-hearted men in our country, who have renounced everything. In the same way as they travel about and give religious instructions without any remuneration, at least half of them can be trained as such teachers. For that, is wanted first of all a centre in the capital of each Presidency and thence to spread slowly throughout whole India. Two centres have recently been started in Madras and Calcutta, there is hope of more soon. Then most part of education to the poor should be given orally, time is not yet ripe for schools. Gradually in these main centres will be taught agriculture, industry etc., and workshops will be established for the furtherance of arts. To sell the manufactures of those workshops in Europe and America, associations will be started like those already in existence. It will be necessary to start centres for women exactly like unto them for men. But you are aware how difficult that is in this country. Again the money required for these works would have to come from England. And for that reason our religions should be preached in Europe and America. Modern science has undermined the basis of religions like Christianity. Over and above that, luxury is about to kill the religious instinct itself. Europe and America are looking towards India with expectant eyes—this is the time for philanthropy. In the West women rule: all influence and power are theirs. If bold and talented women like yourself, versed in Vedanta, go to England, I am sure that every year many men and women become blessed by adopting the religion

of India. The only woman who went over from our country was Ramabai; her knowledge of English, Western science and art was limited, still she surprised all. If any one like you go, England will be stirred, what to speak of America. If an Indian woman in Indian dress preach the religion which fell from the lips of the Rishis of India, I see a prophetic vision, there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole Western world. Will there be no woman in the land of Maitrayi, Khana, Lilavati, Savitri and Ubhayabharati, who will venture this? The Lord knows. England we shall conquer and possess through power of spirituality. I am a humble mendicant itinerant monk, I am helpless and alone; what can I do? You have power of wealth, intellect and education, will you forego this opportunity? Conquest of England, Europe and America—this should be our one motto at present, in it lies the well-being of the country. Expansion is the sign of life and we must spread the world over with our spiritual ideals. Alas! the frame is poor, moreover the physique of a Bengali: even under this labour a fatal disease has attacked it, but there is the hope—"A kindred spirit will rise out of the limitless time and populous earth to accomplish the work."

About vegetarian diet I have to say this—first, my master was a vegetarian, but if he was given meat offered to the Goddess, he used to hold it up to his head. The taking of life is undoubtedly sinful but so long as through progress in Chemistry vegetable food is not made suitable to the human system, there is no other alternative but meat-eating. So

long as man shall have to live an active life under circumstances like the present, there is no other way except meat-eating. It is true that the Emperor Asoka saved the lives of millions of animals by the (threat of) sword, but is not the slavery of a thousand years more dreadful than that? The taking life of a few goats as against the inability to protect the honour of one's own wife and daughter and to save the morsels for one's children from robbing hands—which of these is more sinful? Let those belonging to the upper ten, who do not earn their livelihood by manual labour, rather not take meat, but the forcing of vegetarianism upon those who have to earn their bread by labouring day and night is one of the causes of the loss of the national freedom. Japan is an example of what good and nourishing food can do. May all-powerful Vishweshwari inspire your heart.

VIVEKANANDA

IN MEMORIAM:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

A strong and sublime personality closed his earthly career on the 4th night when the Swami Vivekananda after returning from a walk passed to eternal rest. The Swami was born a little over 39 years ago, and built for himself a world-wide reputation when he was about thirty as a masterly exponent of the *Vedanta* in the Parliament of Religions of 1893. Since his return in 1897 to India he was engaged, in spite of indifferent health, in a strenuous effort to found the Ramakrishna Mission on an enduring basis. But his friends were

always deeply concerned in the failing health of the apparently strong stalwart-looking beloved leader of theirs. And now that the dreaded event has come to pass, to mourn and suffer seems to be the lot of India.

Her choicest sons are snatched away before her expectations are realised. Her greatest men too early become mere names,—a thing of memory. Is it wrong then to hope? No; disappointments and sorrows are the steps that lead us to our goal. It is thus that we must receive the news of the death of the Swami Vivekananda. He is dead. He has joined the ranks of those who live to us only in their works. It is too early now to form any idea as to the extent of the Swami's influence over the present generation, and through this generation on the future. The grandest and most enduring work that he did according to our view is the teaching of the gospel of strength and love. His lectures, although a noble commentary and exposition of the great Vedanta Philosophy, insisted with splendid force and reiteration on its practical side. From being an abstract speculation to many, it has through the Swami's teaching become an intensely practical guide in our life. "Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through foot-ball than through the study of the Gita. You will understand Gita better with your biceps muscles a little stronger. (The Gita was taught not to an unmanly bit of man but to Arjuna, a great warrior, the leader of the warlike race of Kshatriyas.) You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna with a little of strong blood in you. You will

understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman when your body stands firm upon your feet and you feel yourselves as men." "It seems as if for the last thousand years national life had one end in view *viz.*, how to make us weaker and weaker till we have become real earthworms crawling at the feet of every one who dares to put his foot on us. Therefore, my friends, as one of your blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you that we want strength, strength and every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be vivified, made stronger, energized." Every man, great or small, high or low, is a centre of infinite power, infinite purity, infinite bliss, infinite existence. Only shake off the influence of the body, the power of the flesh, you will come to know the Atman, the pure, the eternal, the ever present. You will then feel your power and strength. Thus the essence of all Swami's work is the gospel of strength and love. "Be strong; free yourself from weakness, extend your love to all" was his feeling and favorite commentary on the Vedanta. In his letter to an Indian prince he said "our life is short: the vanities of the world are transient, and he alone lives who lives for the good of others." All through his writings and his utterances, occur numberless passages like the above which, removed from their setting, lose all their potency. The lips that sounded the bugle call and uttered these inspiring words of strength, of love and of hope are now silent for ever, and all that remains of him now is dearer to the country. When speaking of what the

Vedantic code of ethics requires of every Indian he said, "What we want is not so much spirituality as a little of the bringing of the Advaita into the material world, first bread and then religion. We stuff them too much with religion when the poor fellows have been starving. No dogmas will satisfy the craving of hunger. These are two curses here, first our hatred, secondly our dried up hearts. You may talk doctrines by the millions, you may have sects by the hundreds of millions; aye, but it is nothing until you have the heart to feel for them as your Veda teaches, till you find they are parts of your bodies." Surely a noble religion expounded by a noble patriot. But the zeal of the reformer in him did not blind him to the uses of the forces with which he was not immediately concerned. In his famous epistle he said, "Bring all the forces of good together. Do not care under what banner you march. Do not care what be your color, green, blue or red, but mix all the colors up and produce that intense glow of white, the color of love."

Such was the man whose premature death has cast a gloom on India and left it poorer by one strong and sterling patriot who braced himself for a life of sacrifice and duty by drinking deep of the ancient founts of inspiration.—*The Native States, Madras, July 13th.*

MEN waiting for work seldom see the work that waits for them. The more you work, the more work is given you; the more you work, the greater your powers for work become; and the more you work for others, the more effectually you advance yourself.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : PROF. FRASER'S LETTER

The March No. of the Hindustan Review contains the following letter from Professor Fraser :—

To the Editor of the "*Hindustan Review*."
Dear Sir,

I write to acknowledge the force of the rejoinder which Swami Swarupananda makes in your February number to my article on Swami Vivekananda. It is clear that I did not do him justice. The biography on which my article was based was not a short one (81 pp.), and was written by a professed admirer of the Swami. It was perhaps not unnatural that I should trust it; but I seem to have been mistaken. I might make this letter longer by dealing with various points in which I ought to correct myself. But the reader would probably find it tedious and no doubt Swami Swarupananda will be satisfied with what I have said.

Yours etc.,
J. NELSON FRASER.

REVIEWS

INDIAN PROGRESS. A bi-monthly devoted to the discussion of social, religious, and ethical problems relating to the civilization of India.*

Do the words "Hindu Civilization" mean a reality? Has it a place among other civilizations? Has it grown on its

*Manager, Indian Progress, Esplanade, Madras.
Annual Subscription Rs. 3. Foreign 5s.

bosom anything worthy to be given to the world? Is there anything in it which the world needs—a lack of which will make the world poorer indeed?

The apologist of Hindu civilization has to answer the above questions or others of like purport. On the matter and manner of his reply will hinge the destiny of his claims.

Nothing is so discreditable as discredit. And the greatest discredit of a nation is the loss of its national independence. This discredit has sat on the brow of Hindu India for centuries and tainted its civilization in the eyes of the world. The task of an apologist of Hindu civilization is thus made doubly difficult and not everybody is qualified to undertake it.

Spiritual and ethical perfection is the ideal of Hindu culture. It is admitted on all hands that there could be no higher ideal. We have also no doubt that owing to the excellence of this ideal—the superior quality of this its life—the Hindu social organism has lived so long and lives still. But it is necessary to remember that that organism is very different from what it was, or in other words, there are two Indias, the ancient ideal India and the modern. And while we should not dislodge the ancient ideal from its place, tamper with the life-current of the organism, we must not forget that the system has become petrified to a great extent, and we have not only to find out what in it is dead shell and what is living, but we also have for the sake of health and vigour to rid the system of the dead encumbrances.

To give an illustration. As the sap in a tree cannot infuse life into its dead

limbs, and as the accumulation of dead wood serves to decrease the vigour, stunt the growth and in time to kill the tree, in the same manner the moral conceptions developed by a civilization cannot inform the forms and systems in it which had once their life and use, and the accumulation of these dead forms and systems results in slowly but surely killing the life out of the civilization altogether.

Indian Progress is full of promise as an exponent of the ancient ideal of the Hindu civilization. It is also alive to the need of reform. The principle of reform advocated by it, its conception of Indian progress and its "policy" are sound, worthy and commendable. It has raised our hopes. We shall not only expect from it able expositions of our ancient national, social and religious ideals, but efficient criticism of the evils which have made us a people with a glorious past, an abject present and a doomed future. We expect from it not mere vague generalisations and philosophical disquisitions (we know they have their value), but definite lines of work and practical guidance towards *progress*. We wish it a long life of usefulness and success.

HOW TO BE A YOGI. By *Swami Abhedananda*. The Vedanta Society, New York. Price \$ 1.00.†

We owe an apology to the Vedanta Society for not noticing this excellent work earlier. The Vedanta philosophy in its adaptiveness to the varied tendencies and capabilities of spiritual

† Vide advertisement on cover page iii.

aspirants includes the different branches of the science of Yoga such as Hatha, Raja, Karma, Bhakti and Jnana. This volume is a short but comprehensive survey of the science of Yoga as a whole. The introductory chapter shows up the little importance of the knowledge of phenomena, exposes the hollowness of mere intellectual apprehension of the Truth and sets forth the ideal of true religion as "the realization of the Absolute Truth" and "unfoldment of the divine nature of the soul." The writer had the good fortune to be acquainted with a divine man in India, who had such realization. "His name was Ramakrishna. He never went to any school, neither had he read any of the Scriptures, philosophies, or scientific treatises of the world, yet had reached perfection by realizing God through the practice of Yoga." Next follow a comprehensive definition of the term 'Yoga' and a description of the mode of the building up of the science. "This science, like all others, was based on experience; while the method used in it was the same as that employed by modern science in making all its discoveries of natural law—the method of observation and experiment." The five succeeding chapters contain a luminous exposition of the principles and specific practices of each of the different branches of the science. The various postures practised by a Hatha Yogi, the dietetic rules observed by him, the breathing exercises, the effect of Hatha Yoga on the body and the mind; the aim of Raja Yoga, its eight steps, viz., Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, the obstructions to Samadhi;

explanation of Karma and its action and reaction, the secret of work; the significance of preparatory (*gauni*) and supreme (*parā*) Bhakti, the relation of a Bhakta to his God, "Guru or spiritual eye-opener," efficacy of symbols, rituals and ceremonies, self-resignation and self-surrender to the will of God; the Advaita philosopher's doctrine of Maya and practice of discrimination; these and many other details, too numerous to mention, make the book absorbingly interesting and instructive to the travellers wending their ways by diverse paths to the one goal of all religions. The chapter on the Science of Breathing is an exhaustive exposition of Pranayama and its bearing on spiritual development. The concluding chapter "Was Christ a Yogi?", after shewing what a true Yogi must be, and keeping in view what Christ was, proves him "to be a perfect type of one who is called in India a true Yogi." "It is through the teachings of Vedanta that the Hindus have learned how to glorify the character of Jesus." Let a Christian study His character through the Vedanta philosophy and the writer is sure that he will understand Him better and be a truer Christian than ever before.

PHILOSOPHY OF WORK. By *Swami Abhedananda*. The Vedanta Society, New York. Price cloth, 50 cents.†

The book contains three lectures delivered by Swami Abhedananda under the auspices of the Vedanta Society in Carnegie Lyceum, New York. They are (1) Philosophy of work, (2) Secret of

† Vide advertisement on cover page iii.

work and (3) Duty or Motive in work. In the first lecture, the lecturer explains the fundamental principles of the philosophy of work. In the midst of our varied activities of body and mind, he says, there always remains an inactive entity, the Knower, which is beyond the limitation of mind and body and is our true Self. "It is when on account of our imperfect knowledge, we identify our true Self, the Knower, with the limitations of mind and body," we suffer the miseries attendant on those limitations. Perfect knowledge of the Knower as eternally unaffected by the physical and the mental activities is the goal of religion. Among other methods, knowledge of the secret of right action is one to reach the goal. The secret, as explained in the second and the third lectures, "consists in working ceaselessly without desire for return" and "not through a sense of obligation, but through love." The book is particularly beneficial to those who have an instinctive tendency to work, who are neither philosophical nor able to concentrate or meditate and who find it difficult to believe in a personal God and yet are spiritually inclined.

HOW TO TAN AND FINISH GOAT SKINS IN CHROME. A lecture delivered by *K. E. Talati*, proprietor, Minocheher Leather Works, Bombay, on the 30th January at Pachiappa's Hall, Madras.*

The Americans buy raw skins from India, finish them in their own country and make a good business of it. The lecturer asks, "What prevents us from tanning and finishing in this country itself the enormous quantities of raw skins

we are every day exporting?" Within the last five years the tanning industry of India has suffered from the decline of production owing to raw material being taken away to America. Mr. Talati has made certain improvements on the American chrome tanning process to suit the requirements of Indian climate. The decline of our indigenous industries is responsible for our poverty and the best thanks of the country are due to those who attempt like Mr. Talati to resuscitate and improve them.

WE beg to acknowledge with thanks the following books:—

AN American edition of JNANA YOGA by Swami Vivekananda, published by the Vedanta Society, New York. The Society has done a great service to the cause of the spread of Vedanta in America by bringing out this edition. Neatly printed and excellently got up in cloth. Price \$ 1.50.

THE ZODIACAL CARDS and HOW TO USE THEM. By *Grace Angela*. To be had of the author, Inwood-on-the-Hudson, New York City. Price \$ 1.00.

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS, EXPANSION OF SELF AND AN APPEAL TO AMERICANS ON BEHALF OF INDIA. Three lectures by *Rama Swami*. San Francisco.

VEDANTA AND THEOSOPHY. By *G. K. Shastri*. The "Theosophist Office," Adyar, Madras. 1903.

SOHAM-TATTWA. A book in Bengali by *Soham Swami*. Dacca, Price As. 8.

ASHTANGA YOGA, JNANA YOGA SARA AND YOGA SIDDHANTA. A book in Hindi by *Sri Yogiraja Champanatha*. Jamboo.

*G. A. Natesan & Co., Esplanade, Madras.

NEWS AND NOTES

THE dew that is annually deposited on the surface of England is equal to five inches of rain.

IN 1840 the beet sugar produced equalled only 5 per cent. of the world's production ; now it is 67 per cent.

DOCUMENTS charred by fire may be rendered readable by the application of a weak solution of hydrochloric acid.

THE largest sponge ever found came from the Mediterranean. It was over 3 feet across and 10 feet in circumference.

WE invite the attention of our readers to the March report of the Ramakrishna Home of Service Benares, printed elsewhere.

THE third annual Anandotsava of Sri Ramakrishna Deva was celebrated on the 12th April in the Ananda-kanana at Entally, Calcutta.

THE newest sky-scraper in New York is the Etna building of thirty storeys and 455ft. high from the pavement ! This beats all records.

ABOUT five hundred Japanese have emigrated to Peru. There are already many Japanese in Peru, many of whom have married Peruvian women.

WE wish to acknowledge our indebted-

ness to Doctor Satya Prasanna Ray for giving his services gratis to Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Kankhal, all through the last Kumbha fair.

SUCH is the prosperity of Toranto, Canada, that bricklayers are earning 1s. 10d. an hour and carpenters 1s. 3d. They do not, however, appear to be satisfied, and strikes are continually being talked of.

IT was only two years ago that, under the auspices of some wealthy men of Tokio, a college for girls on an entirely Western basis was established ; and now no less than 800 pupils are taught within its walls.

CORK is about the most buoyant substance there is, but if sunk 200 ft. deep in the ocean it will not rise again to the surface, owing to the great pressure of the water. At any less depth it will gradually work its way back to light.

WE are glad to announce the contribution of Rs. 4000 made by Babu Upendra Narain Dev of Entally, Calcutta, towards the building funds of the Ramakrishna Home of Service, Benares. Our best thanks are due to Upendra Babu. An excellent institution like the Home of Service would not languish for lack of funds so long as discriminate charity exists in India.

MUCH interest is aroused in the world of science by the discovery of a new substance called radium by Monsieur Curie, an eminent French Physicist, and Madame Curie. It possesses the extraordinary property of continuously emitting heat without combustion, its molecular structure remaining spectroscopically identical after many months' continuous emission of heat.

AN eminent doctor says a heavy brain is no indication of intellectual eminence. The average weight of the European brain is from forty-nine to fifty ounces. Yet five out of thirty-one male lunatics, taken without selection from post-mortem records, had brains ranging from fifty to fifty-six ounces. The brains of three female lunatics out of twenty-two exceeded fifty ounces. It is well known that epileptics usually have large brains.

THE 'Star of Hope' newspaper is published twice a week in the famous Sing-Sing Prison of New York. Its contributors, editors, artists, compositors, and publishers are the convict inmates. From beginning to the end the work is carried out solely by the prisoners. The first issue appeared three years ago, and the journal is now acknowledged to be one of the most educational and reformatory factors in Sing-Sing and its four subsidiary institutions.

LAST year in Venezuela alone, 2,000,000 birds were killed for fashion's sake. One London dealer admitted twelve years ago, long before fashion was so pitiless as now, that he sold 2,000,000 small birds every twelve months. Three

recent consignments to London included 10,000 birds of paradise, nearly 800 packages of osprey feathers, 6,700 crested pigeons, 5,500 Impeyan pheasants, 500 bird skins, 270 cases of peacocks' feathers, 1,500 argus pheasants, and 500 various other small birds.

OF European nations the Norwegian and Swedish are the longest lived, the Spaniards the shortest. According to a foreign statistical return recently issued, the average duration of life is as follows: Sweden and Norway, fifty years; England, forty-five years and three months; Belgium, forty-four years and eleven months; Switzerland, forty-four years and four months; France, forty-three years and six months; Austria, thirty-nine years and eight months; Prussia and Italy, thirty-nine years; Bavaria, thirty-six years; and Spain, thirty-two years and four months.

AN Austrian medical man has written to a scientific journal to point out that electric trams are of great benefit to the health of the inhabitants of a great city. Great quantities of electricity are discharged from the overhead wires and from the wheels of the car, and this, acting on the air, generates ozone. The ozone purifies the atmosphere, operates as a powerful disinfectant against the countless germs of disease floating about in a great centre of population, and so contributes to the maintenance of sanitary conditions. Electric trams cause ozone to be generated in small quantities continuously from morning till night, so that the air is being purified all the time.